

OUTLINE MISSIONARY SERIES.



INDIA.

PART I.

Country, People, History, Manners and
Customs, Hinduism.

BY

REV. EDWARD STORROW,

Formerly of Calcutta.

JOHN SNOW AND CO.,

2, IVY LANE, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.



SIXPENCE.



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PREFATORY NOTE.

It has been my endeavour to crowd as much information into the following pages as their limited space would allow.

The reader should bear in mind that what is here written respecting the Country, and the manners, customs, and condition of the People, does not apply to the whole of India invariably. Great diversity necessarily exists in an empire so vast and among a people so varied in race and character. In so brief a review, to have pointed out all the exceptions to the statements made would have been alike tedious and distracting.

India has stronger claims than any other country on our interest as Englishmen and our zeal as Christians. Few of us, alas! comprehend the grandeur of our Eastern Empire, or the immense power to do good which is put into our hands by its possession, or the glory of overthrowing the superstitions of the people, that Christianity may there win its greatest triumph. If the following pages lead any to a truer appreciation of India, and a deeper desire for her evangelization, I shall feel grateful to God.

I desire to express my indebtedness to the following works, and to recommend them to any who wish for a fuller knowledge of India and its people than can possibly be given in these pages:—

“The Indian Empire,” by Dr. W. W. Hunter, C.I.E., Director-General of Statistics to the Government of India—a book which contains more valuable information than can be found elsewhere in the same compass.

“Hinduism,” by Professor Monier Williams.

“Hinduism and its Relations to Christianity,” by Rev. John Robson, M.A.

“India: its Natives and Missions,” by Rev. Canon Trevor.

“Travancore and its People” by Rev. S. Mateer, F.L.S.

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TABLE I.

AREA AND POPULATION OF ALL INDIA, INCLUDING BRITISH BURMAH.

BASED CHIEFLY ON THE CENSUS RETURNS OF 1871-72.

(Taken from Hunter's "Indian Empire.")

	Area in Square Miles.	Population.	Inhabitants per Square Mile.
British India	880,098	186,041,191	211
*Feudatory India	604,590	54,211,158	89
Portuguese Settlements	1,086	407,712	Chiefly in towns or suburban.
French Settlements	178	271,460	
Total for all India, including British Burmah	1,485,952	240,931,521	162

N.B.—The *present* total population of all India, including British Burmah, according to the Census of 1881, amounts to 252 millions. But as the returns are not yet completed, it is not possible to give details.

* More than one-third of India still remains in the hands of its native rulers, but their subjects form only about one-fifth of the whole Indian people. The Native Princes generally govern their respective States with the help and under the advice of a British Resident, appointed to each of their Courts by the Viceroy of India.

TABLE II.

POPULATION OF BRITISH INDIA, CLASSIFIED
ACCORDING TO RACE AND CASTE.

Based on the Census Returns of 1871-72.

Race.	Numbers.	Tracts where most numerous.
HINDUS—		
Brahmans	10,131,541	N.W. Provinces, Oude, Bengal, Punjab.
Rajputs	5,641,138	ditto ditto
Other Hindus	106,331,868	ditto ditto
Outcastes, or non-recog- nizing Caste	8,712,998	Madras Presidency.
Aboriginal Tribes ..	17,716,825	Bengal, Central Provinces, Assam.
Native Christians * ..	1,550,000	South and East.
MUHAMMADANS—		
Mughals	219,755	Punjab, N.W. Provinces.
Afghans or Pathans ..	1,81,693	ditto ditto
Sayyids	79,084	ditto ditto, Bombay.
Shaikhs	4,700,000	N.W. Provinces, Bengal.
Other Muhammadans..	32,674,800	ditto ditto, Madras, Bombay.
FOREIGNERS—		
Arabs	8,311	Bombay.
Armenians	1,254	Bengal.
Baluchis	379,895	Punjab and Bombay.
Chinese	13,340	British Burmah.
Jews	7,626	Bombay.
Malays	1,493	Burmah and Presidency Cities.
Manipuris	11,866	Assam.
Mekranis	5,285	Bombay.
Nepalese	31,182	Bengal, Assam.
Parsees	69,476	Bombay.
Persians	3,545	ditto
Other Races	4,525	
Eurasians and Indo- Portuguese	108,000	Presidency Cities.
Europeans †	121,000	ditto.
	<u>191,078,720</u>	

N.B.—The above returns do not include Feudatory India, the Race and Caste statistics of which cannot be obtained.

* Including Protestants and Roman Catholics.

† Chiefly soldiers.

TABLE III.

POPULATION OF BRITISH INDIA, CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO RELIGION.

Taken chiefly from the Parliamentary Statistical Abstract of 1879.

Religion.	Numbers.	Tracts where most numerous.
Hindus	139,343,820	Bengal, N.W. Provinces, Madras, Bombay, Oude.
Muhammadians	40,867,125	Sind, Punjab, N.W. Provinces, Eastern Bengal.
Buddhists and Jains *	2,832,851	The former almost entirely in British Burmah.
Sikhs	1,174,435	Punjab only.
Other Religions †	5,978,373	South India, Central Provinces, Eastern Bengal.
Christians (throughout all India) :		
Roman Catholics	1,100,000	South India, Lower Bengal.
Protestant Converts	350,000	South India, Lower Bengal.
Ditto ditto British Burmah..	100,000	
Foreign and Mixed Descent	229,000	The Presidency Cities
	<hr/> 191,975,604 <hr/>	

N.B.—These returns do not include the 54,000,000 of Feudatory India, the relative proportion of the various religions of which is not known, except that there are more than three-quarters of a million of Native Christians.

* The Jains are the modern representatives of the Buddhists in India.

† In point of fact, this represents only a portion of the “other religions” of India. About 18,000,000, classified chiefly as Hindus, belong to Aboriginal tribes, the greater part of whom adhere more or less to their Aboriginal beliefs.

INDIA.

I.—THE COUNTRY.

INDIA for ages has been the dreamland of romance, ambition, research, and commerce. To England it is all these as no other land is. Its vast extent, its enormous population, its ancient, unique, and detestable superstitions, and the fact, without a parallel in history, that at a distance of 14,000 miles from our shores, as it formerly was, and 8,000 by the nearest present route, we should have acquired, without effort or design, supremacy over an empire twice as populous as any which Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, Roman, or Christian monarch ever ruled over, should inspire us with an ardent desire that we may be found worthy of this magnificent trust, and be the means of conferring on the people so singularly brought under our rule the blessings and privileges associated with our wealth, freedom, civilization, and Christianity.

Chief Geographical Features.—These are threefold :—

1. India has as its base the Himalaya Mountains—the highest, broadest, and one of the longest mountain-ranges on our planet. They stretch for more than 1,500 miles along our Indian frontier, curving like a scimitar southward at both ends. Rising abruptly from the south, they attain an elevation of 28,000 feet, and gradually slope northward for 400 miles through Thibet and Turkestan.

2. At the base of this stupendous range lies the great River Plain, which stretches from the frontiers of Afghanistan and Beluchistan on the west, to those of Burmah on the east, over an extent of 1,900 miles; and reaches southward for 400 miles, as far as the Vindhya Mountains. Three great rivers—the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra—water this immense plain, making it one of the finest, most

extensive, and most fertile on the surface of the globe. The whole, with the exception of the great desert of Jesalmeer, east of the Indus, forms one unbroken level of unvaried richness, through which majestic rivers, with slow and almost insensible course, pursue their way. The province of Bengal presents the most perfect specimen of this plain. Its vast surface is hardly broken by a rock or a hill. Its alluvial soil, watered by numerous tributaries of the Ganges and copious rains, and nourished by a vertical sun, is even dangerously fertile. The provinces of Behar, higher up the Ganges, and Oude and Rohilcund to the north-west, are almost as fertile. The eastern or Gangetic side of this magnificent valley has been for more than 2,000 years the seat of power and the source of wealth; in it are most of the great cities of the empire, Calcutta, Benares, Lucknow, Agra, Delhi, Umritsur, and Lahore; and its 100,000,000 inhabitants live with less toil than do any equal number of people elsewhere.

3. From the southern edge of the Gangetic plains several distinct hill systems take their rise. These are known in the aggregate as the Vindhya Mountains, and with them commences the great triangular plateau of Southern India, which comprises the Central Provinces, Berar, the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, Mysore, with the Native Territories of the Nizam, Sindia, Holkar, and other feudatory States. The other two sides of this elevated triangle are known as the Eastern and Western Ghats—two mountain chains which start southward from the eastern and western extremities of the Vindhya and run along the two coasts of the Indian Peninsula, until they meet at Cape Comorin. The Eastern Ghats gradually recede inland, leaving broad, level tracts between their base and the sea. The Western Ghats rise abruptly, at a distance of only thirty or forty miles from the sea-coast, to an average elevation of 3,000 feet; but with magnificent peaks and headlands often twice as high. The inner triangular plateau thus enclosed lies from 1,000 to 3,000 feet above the level of the sea, gradually sloping from the west to the east. But it is dotted with peaks and seamed with ranges exceeding 4,000 feet in height. The scenery is in many places very fine, and the climate good.

Extent.—India is 1,900 miles long, and where widest is

as broad, and has an area of 1,485,950 square miles.* Thus in extent it is equal to sixteen Great Britains, and is almost equal to the whole of Europe, exclusive of Russia. Its limits are remarkably well defined, and few regions are so protected by nature from external attack. The great triangle has the sea on two sides, with no harbour for hundreds of miles on either coast; on the other side are mountains over or through the passes of which no modern army could make its way, were they reasonably well guarded. Within this territory, which extends from the hottest regions of the equator to far within the temperate zone, the greatest diversity of scenery, climate, and production prevails.

The Seasons are very sharply defined. *The rains* commence early in June, being brought by the trade winds from the south-west, and are excessive for about eleven weeks, though they do not cease until the end of October, ending usually as they begin, with thunder and lightning. In these nineteen or twenty weeks the rainfall in Bengal equals that of England in two years. On the West Coast there are two monsoons, from June to August, and from October to December; the rainfall usually being 120 inches.

The cold season next sets in. The wind veers from south to north. The days are as warm as those of an English summer, but the nights are almost sufficiently cold to make a fire welcome. For four months this splendid weather continues, unchequered save by one or two days of gentle rain.

In March commences the fierce and fiery *hot season*. It is very rare for the heat of an English summer to equal that of India for even two or three days, and our nights are almost invariably much cooler. In India the thermometer stands for weeks above 90°, slightly varied only by the sea breezes and terrific thunderstorms.

The Climate is, of course, conditioned by the seasons, and the physical characteristics of the various regions. Heat is its principal feature, modified only by the dryness of one season and the excessive moisture of another. The former is most enervating, the latter most destructive. The fertile soil, fed and nourished by copious rains and

* See Table I.

abundant heat, produces an amount of vegetation which is even troublesome to the cultivator; and the rapid excessive growth, followed by almost as rapid decay, produces the fever, spleen, cholera, and dysentery, which are the bane of life in India. All forms of life are more abundant there than here, but they are more shortlived. Thus India can never be colonized by Europeans, and this fact must powerfully affect all our relations towards it. Nevertheless, they may live there many years if possessed of healthy constitutions and prepared to comply with the conditions of the climate—temperance, protection against malaria, damp, and the sun's rays, and the avoidance of excessive physical exertion. These remarks apply principally to the low-lying hills and the plains. The slopes of the Himalayas and the higher elevations of Southern and Western India are much more temperate and healthy.

The greatest wealth of India consists in its fertile soil, but its **Mineral Productions** are considerable. The diamonds of Golconda (now no longer found) and the pearls found on its extreme south-eastern coast have an historic fame. Gold is found in some of the river beds, and in some districts in the south. Ironstone abounds in parts of the Himalayas and Central India, and at least one extensive coal-field exists, 120 miles north-west of Calcutta.

The Vegetable Productions are very varied, though, unlike other large geographical areas, as Australia and South America, India has no distinctive botanical features. The forests contain many timber trees, as the Teak, Sal, Sissu; and ornamental and fragrant woods, as Sandal and Ebony. The Babul, Banyan, Cotton, and one or two kinds of Acacia are scattered over the cultivated country. Fruit-trees are abundant, as the Mangoe, Tamarind, Mulberry, Jack, Licheu. The Palms are numerous in kind, most useful, and ever please the eye with their graceful beauty. Of these the Cocoa and Palmyra are most abundant everywhere within scent of the sea, and have each sixty or seventy distinct uses. The Date for its sugar, the Plantain for its wholesome, plentiful fruit, the Areka for its universally relished nuts, are greatly valued. The low-lying jungles are impenetrable by reason of the dense vegetation, and the forests are made picturesque by im-

mense creepers, many of which bear masses of gorgeously coloured and highly scented flowers.

Trees and shrubs yielding resins, gums, varnish, and medicines are abundant. Pepper, Mustard, Ginger, and many Spices are the common produce of the fields. Fruit in great variety is abundant all through the year.

Foods of very various kinds are produced. *Rice* has from time immemorial been associated with Indian agriculture. It is mainly cultivated in the deltas of the great rivers and the long strips of land fringing the coast; and the rice-eating population numbers more than seventy millions. *Wheat* is more or less grown in every district; and throughout all the North-west it is the staple production. But, taking India as a whole, *Millet*, under various forms, such as Joar, Bajra, Ragi, is the chief food grain. Indian corn, Barley, Pulses, Yams, and vegetables of many other kinds are also grown in great abundance.

Coffee and Tea, almost entirely for exportation, are being produced in annually increasing quantities. The cultivation of the former is confined to Ceylon and Southern India, and the quantity now exported reaches forty million pounds annually. Tea is a more recent culture in Assam, Cachar, the northern slopes of the Himalayas, &c. More than forty million pounds, or one-fourth of the quantity consumed annually in Great Britain, is now grown in India. Hemp, Flax, Cotton, Silk, Tobacco, Cinchona, Indigo, Opium, are also extensively produced.

The productiveness of India is mainly owing to the protection given to the people by the British Government, and the stimulus afforded by our own commercial enterprise. "At the beginning of the last century, before England became the ruling power in India, the entire country did not produce £1,000,000 a year of staples for exportation. During the first half-century of our actual rule the exports slowly rose to about £10,000,000 in 1834. During the half-century from that date the old inland duties, and other remaining restrictions on Indian trade have been abolished, and exports have multiplied by six-fold. In 1880 India sold to foreign nations £66,000,000 worth of strictly Indian produce, which the Indian husbandman had raised, and for which he was paid. In that year the total trade of India, including exports and

imports, exceeded £122,000,000. The staples exported exceed by twenty-one million pounds sterling annually the merchandize imported, so that, since the people are less heavily taxed than by any previous rulers, at least one-third of this sum, or £7,000,000, is received to the enrichment of the people.”*

Animal life is varied and numerous. Elephants, rhinoceroses, bears, wild buffaloes, are found in the forests; tigers, leopards, panthers, wild boars, hyenas, wolves, infest them and the patches of jungle near cultivated lands. Deer, antelopes, and other game, monkeys, jackals, porcupines, alligators, serpents, and other reptiles, abound. Sheep, horses, cows, goats, buffaloes, camels, are much used for domestic purposes. *Birds* are numerous, especially sparrows, crows, hawks, vultures, and parrots. *Fish* is plentiful. *Insects* abound; some of them and the reptiles being very troublesome and destructive.

II.—THE PEOPLE.

The idea that the inhabitants of India were a homogeneous race of pure Aryan descent, has now been abandoned. Few countries have a more mixed population, because few have been so frequently invaded, or so often been the promised land of emigrant tribes and adventurers.

The Aborigines.—At the dawn of history, more than 3,000 years ago, two distinct races are seen struggling with each other in India. The one a great tribe of invaders who entered from the north-west; tall, fair, having Caucasian features, and mental as well as physical qualities of a high order. Their civilization was considerably advanced, and their social organization, though simple, was strong.

The other race had already spread throughout the land, and was divided into a great variety of tribes. They, too, in yet more remote ages had been successive invaders, having little in common with each other; some being far inferior—physically, mentally, and socially—to the others. None of them knew letters, so that our knowledge of them is derived by inference from what their descendants are, or

* Hunter's "Indian Empire," pp. 441-42.

from the prejudiced testimony of their conquerors. The latter called themselves *Ary-ans*—"noble," or "respectable;" and their adversaries *Dasyaus*—"enemies," and *Dasas*, "slaves." They speak of them contemptuously as "disturbers of sacrifice," "without gods," "without rites," "gross feeders on flesh," "lawless," "noseless, or flat, small nosed," and in the course of time as "monkeys," "monsters," "demons." There is little doubt that these earlier inhabitants were fiercer, darker in complexion, shorter, less comely in feature, and ruder in manners than their Aryan invaders.

From these two stocks have sprung more than nine-tenths of the inhabitants of India; it is important therefore to indicate whence they came and who they were.

Non-Aryan Races.—In pre-historic times various bands of emigrants entered India from the north-west and north-east. Modern philology has analysed them into three great divisions—the Thibeto-Burman, the Kolarian, and the Dravidian. The former dwelt with the forefathers of the Mongolians and Chinese in Central Asia; the latter came from the same great hive of humanity in ancient times, but farther west, in Scythia, and some yet more to the west.

Aryans.—There dwelt also in that vast, strange region of Central Asia, a great Aryan race, which broke into two divisions, one of which migrated westward, the other into India. One branch of the former founded the Persian empire; another built Athens and became the Greek race; a third went on to found the Roman empire in Italy; and others penetrated into Spain, France, Germany, and Britain. The other great division settled in the fruitful region south of the Himalayas, along the sources of the Jumna and Ganges, and gradually spread southward and eastward, pressing the weaker aborigines into the wooded ranges, or to the extremities of the land, or absorbing them into their own communities.

But in various parts of the country the earlier inhabitants resisted the invaders and held their own. The Bheels and Dangas of Gujerat and Malwa; the Santals and Doms of the Central Provinces; the Kols, Khonds, and Saurias of Orissa; the Todas, Kotas, Buddagars, Korumbars, and other tribes scattered over the Nilgherries and the Western

Ghats, are clearly of very diverse and non-Aryan origin. Their features, languages, superstitions, manners and customs make this abundantly clear. The great bulk of the population of the Deccan is of aboriginal descent. It is supposed by some that though, like others, the latter issued out of Scythia, they were farther advanced in civilization and came posterior to other tribes, expelling them from their first possessions, as they were at a subsequent period by the Aryans. Their distinct origin and powerful influence is seen in the fact that they have given a group of five great cultivated languages,* with seven of inferior repute, to 46 millions of people.

Scythian and Greco-Bactrian invaders contributed to the population of India for more than 300 years before and after the Christian era. Hordes of the former spread along the banks of the Indus, then, passing eastward, settled in the centre of the rich Gangetic Valley. The kingdom of which Sakya Muni (who gave Buddhism to almost one-third of the human race) was a prince, is supposed to have been ruled by a family of this stock. The Jâts who form almost half the population of the Punjab are probably of Scythian origin.

The Muhammadans of Central and Western Asia contributed powerfully to influence the destinies and affect the population of India. As now, from the various states of Europe, for 200 years there has passed over into America an unbroken stream of adventurers and emigrants, so for more than thrice that period, from the first invasion of Mahmoud of Ghizni in 1001, Afghans, Persians, Arabs, Mughals, and Turkomans, found their way into India, and zealously spread their faith by argument, persuasion, political influence, and force.

The Muhammadans now number as many as forty-three millions, and are therefore equal to the population of France, Belgium, and Switzerland. About one half are the descendants of conquerors and emigrants; the other half of Hindu and aboriginal converts.

The Hindus number 190 millions, and exceed the Roman Catholic population of our earth. Of these the *Brahmans* are intellectually, socially, and religiously the most distinguished. They are of pure Aryan descent, and represent

* The Tamil, Telugu, Canarese, Malayalim, and Tulava.

a remarkable race. They are tall, grave, dignified, with finely-cut, mild, intellectual features, and a light brownish-yellow complexion. Their intellectual powers are of a high order, though speculative rather than practical.

Taken altogether as a class and a race whose pretensions are based on the most extraordinary religious claims, they are the most remarkable body of men the world has ever seen. "The Brahmans of the present day are the result of 3,000 years of hereditary education and self-restraint; and they have evolved a type of mankind quite distinct from the surrounding population. Even the passing traveller in India marks them out, alike from the bronze-cheeked, large-limbed, leisure-loving Rájput, or warrior caste of Aryan descent, and from the dark-skinned, flat-nosed, thick-lipped, low-castes of non-Aryan origin, with their short bodies and bullet heads. The Brahman stands apart from both, tall and slim, with finely modelled lips and nose, fair complexion, high forehead, and slightly cocoanut-shaped skull—the man of self-centred refinement. He is an example of a class becoming the ruling power in a country, not by force of arms, but by the vigour of hereditary culture and temperance. One race has swept across India after another, dynasties have risen and fallen, religions have spread themselves over the land and disappeared. But since the dawn of history, the Brahman has calmly ruled; swaying the minds and receiving the homage of the people, and accepted by foreign nations as the highest type of Indian manhood."*

Next to the Brahmans in pure Aryan descent are the *Rájputs*, although some ascribe to them a Scythian origin; whilst the Hindus in the south have least of Aryan blood, being largely descended from the conquered races, whose subjugation was assured by their enrolment at the base of the caste system.

All Hindus share more or less in the fine intellectual and physical qualities of the Brahmans, but there has grown up among the former as great a diversity of appearance, character, and ability as between the nations of Europe. This is traceable in all the great provinces of the Empire, which, but for a dominant, welding, cohesive power, would inevitably again become so many distinct

* Hunter's "Indian Empire," p. 106.

nationalities, as they have been, or have striven to be, in all past ages.

Geographical Distribution of Races.—Only the great features of the population can be thus indicated.*

The Oriyas number between seven and eight million, and the west of their little province is inhabited by rude, aboriginal tribes of Khonds and Santals, who number at least one million. The Oriyas resemble their Hindu neighbours to the north, though they are less intellectual and more moral. Their language more generally approaches Bengali than any other Aryan tongue. The whole province is regarded as sacred, and enjoys the highest renown as a place of pilgrimage.

Bengal is the largest and most populous province of the empire. The great mass of the people are Hindus of a rigid type, and mainly of Aryan descent. They are smaller, darker, more fleshy than the people farther north, and in manners, customs, and language are a distinct, highly intellectual nation. Two out of the three races who originally peopled India entered it through Bengal, leaving numerous settlers in their progress. Not a few of these gradually became the lowest stratum of the Hindu body politic—Sudras—hence the prevalence in Bengal of divinities and forms of worship clearly of aboriginal derivation. No fewer than sixty distinct non-Aryan tribes, containing no less than eleven millions of people, mostly of Thibeto-Burman origin, still inhabit the extreme east and west of the province.

A general similarity characterizes the vast population lying between Bengal and the Punjab, in the provinces of *Behar*, *Oude*, *Rohilcund*, and the *North-west*, including most of the renowned cities of the past—Benares, Lucknow, Agra, and Delhi. This has all along been the principal seat of the Hindu race, and is freest from aboriginal traces. The people generally are tall, well proportioned, manly, and brave. In colour they are lighter than the people further south. Hindi, in two separate dialects, is the language spoken.

The *Punjab* has passed through more race and religious revolutions than any other province. It lay in the way of invaders and emigrants from the North-west. Tribe after

* See Table II.

tribe of Dravidians from Scythia possessed it in prehistoric times. Then came the Aryans, who long made it their favourite abode. Then followed another great Scythian invasion, and then it was coveted and possessed by the Muhammadans. Nearly one-half the population are Jâts, of Scythian descent. The remainder are mainly derived from Aryan, Rájput, and Afghan sources. They are a fine, brave, manly people. The Sindians are a mixed race of Jâts and Beluchis; the former from Scythia, the latter from Persia and Arabia.

Gujerat is inhabited by a very mixed population. The Hindus predominate, but are of mixed race. Of these the Mahrattas are most numerous, who claim only to be Sudras. Next in number are the Rájputs, claiming to be of noble Khetriya descent; then come Brahmans, and finally aborigines, like the Coolies, who have adopted Hinduism. But non-Aryan tribes are compact and powerful, as the Dangas and Bheels, and the Sedees of African origin.

The *Rájputs* are a compact people numbering twenty millions. Whether they are of Scythian or Aryan descent is not certain; but though Hindus of a specially rigid type, they have little in common with the Brahmans, the representatives of the latter. History indeed obscurely suggests that they have been their great and most formidable rivals. They are a haughty, brave, quarrelsome, idle race, and have been the authors of some of the most chivalrous and romantic episodes in Indian history. Some of their reigning dynasties are the oldest in the world.

The *Mahrattas* prevail from the Nerbudda all through the *Bombay Presidency*. They are Hindus of a very bigoted type, but differ materially in language and physical and mental characteristics from the Rájputs and Hindustanis.

Farther south though Hinduism is still the prevalent religion, the people are less of Aryan descent. *Canarese*, one of the great Dravidian languages of the south, is spoken by seven millions on the west coast, in *Hyderabad* and *Mysore*.

On the opposite (*Malabar*) coast live twenty million people who speak *Telugu*, and are reputed "the handsomest nation in Southern India." "Their language has been

called the Italian of the East, an appellation not more due to the melliflence of its sounds than to the fine air and manners of those who speak it."

The *Tamil* population occupies the *extreme south of the East Coast*, and extends to near Trevandrum on the west. It is supposed that a powerful kingdom, in an advanced state of civilization, existed here anterior to Brahmanical times. The largest temples in India are found here, and some of the finest specimens of native architecture. The people are distinguished for their skill and ingenuity in the arts and in manufactures. Their literature is extensive and of a refined quality. Bishop Caldwell calls them "the Greeks or Scotch of the East"—"certainly the least scrupulous and superstitious, the most enterprising and persevering race of Hindus." It was here to the greatest extent that the Dravidian and Aryan races coalesced, with the result of a more powerful influence from the former on the latter than is elsewhere seen. The people are largely of non-Aryan descent. Their language is Dravidian. Their religion retains its aboriginal features; distinctly so in demon and spirit or ancestral worship, with their mysterious and revolting rites. Caste even has features which it had not in ancient times, nor now has among northern races. The Sudra castes, for instance, here rank high; since below them, with the singular inveteracy of the system and the race, new and inferior castes have been formed, whilst many yet remain Pariahs or, still more degraded, Pulayars (of Malabar), without any name or place in this remarkable and mysterious commonwealth.

On the *extreme south of the Malabar coast* is a large population of Dravidian descent, yet with features of a different character. Their language, the *Malayalim*, differs from Tamil, and is written in a different character. Here are the Nairs who practise polyandry, and as a result inheritance and succession go in the female and not the male line, the son of the sister succeeding as heir, in disregard of the deceased's own offspring. The Moplals are probably of Arab descent, and are known as intensely fanatical Muhammadans. This, too, is the chief seat of the Syrian Christians, now divided into the Syrian, Roman Catholic Syrian, and Anglo-Syrian communions;

and, finally, of a small colony of Jews at Cochin who have resided here for an unknown period, and of a large, degraded population of aboriginal descent, who were slaves until British supremacy set them free.

But the *Central portions* of the empire, extending for more than a thousand miles, from the Vindhya Mountains to the south of the Nilgherry Hills, present the greatest variety of population. Some tribes even seem to be fragments of races dominant and numerous prior to the Dravidian migrations, and yet more are of the latter stock. The Todas, Rotas, Buddagurs, and Koorumburs are among the tribes best known in the southern hills. Further north, beyond the great feudatory State called Hyderabad, or the Nizam's Dominions, with its nine millions of inhabitants, lies a great region the least known in all India. Within and on three sides of the Central Provinces lie numerous tribes of Kols, Khonds, Dhangars, Santals, and others. The physical characteristics of all these, as well as their languages, superstitions, manners, customs, and traditions, proclaim them of non-Aryan descent, though here and there Brahmanism has brought them within its subtle power.*

In Bengal and Assam the aboriginal races are divided into nearly sixty distinct tribes, whilst in the North-west Provinces there are sixteen more.

Languages.—The languages spoken by the various nationalities and races, thus reviewed, fall into three classes or groups:

1. Those of **Sanskrit** origin, spoken by more than 125 millions of the people, viz., Bengali, Oriya, Western Hindi or Canourgi, Eastern Hindi or Mithala, Punjabi, Sindhu, Gujerati, and Marathi.

2. The **Dravidian** group of twelve distinct languages, the first five being highly cultivated—Tamil, Telugu, Canarese, Malayalim, Tulu or Tulana, Kudugu, To-da, Kota, Ghond, Randh, Uraon, and Rajmahal.

3. The nine principal languages of the **Kolarian** group: the Santal, Mundari, Ho, Bhumi, Korwa, Kharria, Juang, Kurku, Savar.

But even these are not all, for a distinct list has been

* Trevor's "India: its Natives and Missions," chap. i.

made of no less than 142 of the principal non-Aryan languages and dialects.*

The Muhammadans form almost a fifth of the entire population of India, and are found in all parts and among all classes of the empire, but they are most numerous in the North-western Provinces and Eastern Bengal. Contemptuous as Muhammadans are of idolatry and all usages not their own, they have been more affected and influenced by those of India than any elsewhere. Even caste-rules prevail among them. According to Brahmanical theory they are inferior to any low caste Hindu, but practically they occupy a respectable place in native society, so that a low-caste Hindu rises in general respectability by becoming a Muhammadan; but it is a proof of the excessive immobility of the older religion that, notwithstanding this and other advantages extending over several generations, Muhammadanism has made no greater progress.

The poorest classes who profess Islam cling to the language of the province in which they live, but Hindustani is in general use, not only among respectable Muhammadans, but in everything relating to public affairs, and as the medium of communication between Europeans and all domestics. It will carry any one through all India with more facility than French would have done through polite society in Europe during last century, or Latin in the middle ages. It is a remarkable instance of the formation of a language in modern times, since it is a mixture of Persian—the language of the first Muhammadan invaders—with Hindi, the prevalent vernacular of the races among whom they originally settled, and where the seat of their power was established.

More than 90 per cent. of the population of India belong to the three great divisions of Hindus, Muhammadans, and Aborigines thus reviewed.† The following represent distinct religions as well as races:—

The Sikhs are hardly found beyond the Punjab. Their religion is a singular admixture of Hinduism and Muhammadanism. It was founded by Nanuk, who was born in 1469. Its chief tenets are the Divine unity; the importance of reverence and obedience toward God, and of harmless treatment of all His creatures.

* Hunter's "Indian Empire," p. 83.

† See Table III.

The Parsees are of Persian descent, and are fire-worshippers. They fled toward India at the close of the seventh century; and through their ability in mercantile affairs and superior moral character gradually became influential in the towns of Scinde and Gujerat, though they do not exceed 70,000 in number.

Buddhism prevails around India, in Thibet, Nepaul, and Ceylon; but its only adherents in the Empire proper are in British Burmah.

III.—HISTORY.

The history of ancient India is very obscurely known to us. Three great events distinguish it.

1. **The Emigration of the Aryan race** from Central Asia, probably whilst Judges ruled in Israel, between 1400 and 1100 B.C.

2. **The Rise of Buddhism.** Gautama, or Sakya Muni, its founder, is supposed to have died B.C. 543. It spread in the course of three hundred years throughout Northern India; and then Asoka, the powerful king of Magadha, or Behar, who, like the first Christian emperor, was converted by a miracle, attempted to do for it in 257 B.C. what Constantine the Great did for Christianity. Thenceforth it became a powerful rival of Brahmanism, although it never entirely supplanted it in any part of India. The two co-existed as popular religions for about one thousand years, from about 250 B.C. to about 800 A.D. The time as well as the causes of its decline are uncertain. Brahmanical jealousy and zeal were among these, and probably culminated in a ruthless persecution and destruction of everything distinctly Buddhist. In the eleventh century, only outlying states as Kashmere and Orissa remained faithful; and before the Muhammadans fairly came upon the scene, Buddhism as a popular religion had almost disappeared in India. But long prior to this it had spread by royal embassages and missionary zeal to Ceylon, Kashmere, Nepaul, Thibet, China, Burmah, and Siam; and, singularly, whilst none of its adherents remain in the land of its origin, it has become the religion of almost one-third of the human race.

3. **Alexander the Great** entered India B.C. 327, and

would have marched to its eastern extremities had he not been deterred by the fears of his own troops.

Apart from these three great events, during a period of almost 2,000 years, we indistinctly see looming here and there through a vague mass of history, legend, and mythology, great Aryan states as Magadha, Mithala, and Kanoug, pre-Aryan kingdoms also, and numerous related tribes; great cities, as Palibothra and Ayodhya; great kings as Ram, Asoka, Chandragupto, and Vicramaditya, and great religious and social teachers as Byasa, Menu, Sakya Muni, and Sankaracharya. But not until the middle of the seventh century of our era do we arrive at the commencement of reliable history; for it is a remarkable fact, that numerous and able as Hindu writers were in ancient times, not one ever wrote true, reliable history.

In 664 A.D. the Muhammadans first appear, when the Arabs made an inroad to Multan. Sind was invaded by them in 711 but held for less than forty years. It was Mahmood of Ghizni who laid the foundations of Muhammadan supremacy, through the twelve expeditions he successfully led against powerful combinations of Hindu princes, extending from 1001 to 1024 B.C. But the Indian conquests were governed from Afghanistan until 1206, when Kutub-ud-din became the first independent Muhammadan ruler in Delhi.

The Mughals.—Various dynasties rapidly succeeded one another, whose power was confined chiefly to North-western India, until Baber with his Afghans, after a most romantic history in Central Asia and India, spent in various conflicts with his co-religionists and Hindu princes, laid the foundations of the splendid Mughal Empire. It continued for 222 years, from 1526 to 1748. No royal family in history has produced such a series of distinguished rulers, splendid and great, though not certainly good, according to our ideas of goodness. This is especially true of the first six sovereigns, Baber, Humayon, Akbar, Jehangier, Shah Jehan, and Aurungzeb. Their empire included the whole of Hindustan, as well as Cabul, Kashmere, and Sind, and for a time extended to the Deccan, though Hindu kingdoms like Vizayanagar, and Muhammadan ones like that ruled by the Bhamani dynasty, defied their power. They were a wise, energetic, brave, magnificent race, and had the

sagacity to surround themselves with very able men, as commanders, administrators, and financiers, so that, although the welfare and elevation of the people were overlooked—as they always have been in every Asiatic empire—there were unusual manifestations of power, splendour, statesmanship, and imperial greatness.

The Deccan, as formerly it was called, or all India south of the Nerbudda and Mahanadi rivers, or of the Vindhya Mountains, was a great field of conflict for 800 years prior to the present century. Here the race and religious struggles of the Aryans and aborigines were most severe. Here Hindu kingdoms long flourished, slowly subverted by Muhammadan powers, some of which were independent of the Mughal Empire and long resisted its invasions, as the Hindus before them did. Here was the cradle of the vast and formidable Mahratta power, which gradually and with difficulty subdued many Hindu states, wore down the strength and power of the Mughal Empire, and thus prepared the way for us to inherit its splendid place. Here the usurped dominion of Hyder Ali and his son Tippu was established and the Portuguese power flourished, and here were some of our earliest and severest conflicts with the Mysore sovereigns, the French, and the Mahrattas.

Various Hindu states, some of which were extensive and powerful, extended over the south prior to A.D. 1294, when first the Muhammadans appeared in force. That invasion revealed the weakness of the existing states and the attractions of the entire region, so that the efforts of the most able and energetic of the Mughal sovereigns were again and again concentrated on its conquest, until this was almost accomplished by the year 1707, when Aurungzeb died.

The Bhamani kingdom, the first independent Muhammadan state established in the Deccan, was founded on the ruins of an ancient Hindu sovereignty, in 1347, at Kalburga, west of Hyderabad, and existed until 1526.

The Bijapore kingdom arose out of this in 1498, and became absorbed in the Mughal Empire by Aurungzeb in 1686. It extended from about Goa to Bombay, and an equal distance from the sea coast eastwards. Other smaller kingdoms, such as *Ahmednuggur*, *Golconda*, *Berar*, can only be named in this sketch.

The **Mahrattas** deserve distinct notice, for they played an important part in the history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and disputed supremacy both with the Muhammadans and ourselves. Their country extends from the river Nerbudda to the south of Goa, and eastward from the sea to beyond Nagpur and Bigapur. Its great feature is the Ghats, stretching throughout the whole country at a distance of thirty or forty miles from the sea. On the summits of these hills were placed the forts of the chiefs, which helped so much to give a character to the people and to their conflicts with their neighbours. The country was held by a great number of independent chieftains, who frequently, with their adherents, entered the armies of the Deccan sovereigns, or accepted civil employment under them.

Shahji, one of these chiefs, of Rájput descent, high in the service of the Ahmednuggur sovereigns, was the father of Sivagi, the founder of the Mahratta power. By great courage, cunning, and audacity, he gradually made himself master of numerous hill forts, all strong and some deemed impregnable, extending over the Ghats for two hundred and fifty miles. Gathering the Mahrattas to his standard, he inspired them with his own dreams of rapine and power, withstood the repeated attacks of the best generals of the Bijapore and Mughal sovereigns, and alternately became—to serve his own interests—the dreaded vassal and the powerful enemy of the latter. He extended his dominions in the south, compelled the kings of Bijapore and Golconda to pay him tribute, and established a powerful kingdom. He died in 1680 after a life crowned with romance.

No leader of equal renown succeeded him, but the race had become inspired, as Asiatics alone can be, with a concurrent passion for war and plunder. Active, hardy, abstemious, ubiquitous, they harassed, evaded, and even defeated the powerful armies sent against them by Aurungzeb and his successors; and next to the degeneracy of the Mughal rulers and their civil wars, the attacks of these subtle, irrepressible horsemen were the cause of the downfall of that empire.

Their subsequent remarkable history can only be hinted at. They became supreme at Delhi, the emperors being

puppets in their hands. About 1724 several officers rose to distinction who became virtually independent, and the founders of states yet existant and among the most powerful of our feudatories. These were Holkar, a cavalry soldier of the Sudra caste, whose family still possess Indore; Scindia, a Rájput, who rose from the humble position of being the Peshwa's slipper bearer; the Gaekwar of Baroda, the first known of whose family was a cowherd; and Raghuji Bhonsla, a Khetriya, who became virtual ruler of Berar. In 1761, at Paniput, the combined Mahratta forces met with one of the most terrible defeats recorded in history, at the hands of the Afghans and their allies, from which they never recovered. Yet they were our most formidable and troublesome enemies from 1775 to 1819. After they had thus overrun and ruled from the Indus to the Cauvery, and from the sea coast of Orissa westward to Gujerat, we wrested the Deccan from them at Assaye and Ahmednuggur, and Hindustan at Delhi and Laswari; since which their leaders have become great feudatories of our empire, and their subjects peaceful husbandmen.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans who formed settlements in India. When Vasco da Gama sailed round the south of Africa and reached Calicut in 1498, all intelligent Europe knew that a new era had dawned for the human race. The Portuguese, with their wonted selfishness, at once attempted to monopolise the commerce between the East and West, and to establish themselves throughout the former. A viceroy of India was sent out in 1505, and they formed several settlements on the western coast, at Diu, in Gujerat, and in Ceylon. But their dream of absorbing the wealth of the East, of subjugating India to their rule, and of making its races Roman Catholic, failed ignominiously, as it deserved to do. Portugal has always been singularly barren of great men, and those it sent to India, with the exception of Alphonso Albuquerque, were unprincipled as well as incapable. They made war without the least provocation on both Muhammadan and Hindu states. They excelled even the natives in falsehood, treachery, cruelty, and greed. They sought alternately to seduce and coerce the people to Popery. Thus they not only lost the confidence of the natives, but

incurred their hate; and the small and decayed possessions of Goa, Daman, and Diu, with a population of less than half a million, are all that now remain to them.

The Dutch followed the Portuguese in 1594, but on the continent they never obtained great political power, though their possessions in the splendid islands between India and China are yet considerable. Ceylon was theirs for 150 years, but it, as well as their four small settlements on the western coast of India, fell into our hands ninety-nine years ago.

The Danish possessions at Tranquebar in the south and Serampore near Calcutta, honourably distinguished as the seats of the first Protestant Missions in the two great regions of the continent, were sold to us in 1845.

The French had a remarkable history, characterized by ambition, brilliance, want of moral principle, and ignominious failure. Though they commenced to trade with India in 1604, their first settlement was not formed until 1668, at Surat. Rapidly after this they gained a footing on the east coast, at Masulipatam, Pondicherry, and Chandernagore, thirty miles north of Calcutta. Gradually, by forming alliances with native princes, and playing off one against the other, they seemed in a fair way of becoming the masters of India. In the middle of last century most of Southern India was directly or indirectly subject to them. The genius of Dupleix conceived the stupendous plan of occupying the throne of the Mughal at Delhi by a Frenchman. The state of affairs seemed favourable to this ambitious project. The old Native States were weak through corruption and frequent wars; the new rulers, who were little better than adventurers, were ready to enter into dangerous alliance with them. The natives, as usual, were without confidence in each other. The French had leaders of brilliant qualities and great ambition. The English were weak, and seemed on the point of being driven to their ships. But a few years completely reversed all; and now the French possessions cover a smaller area and contain fewer people than even those of the Portuguese.

The romance as well as the glory of Indian history culminates in that of **British India**. In 1600, the most extraordinary chartered body ever formed was incorpo-

rated by Queen Elizabeth. It was entitled "The Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading to the East Indies." Its design was purely commercial. The first factory was founded at Surat in 1611. The Mughal emperors took kindly to the English through their ambassadors, doctors, and peaceable adventurers, so that gradually they extended their settlements to Madras in 1639, to the banks of the Ganges in 1640, and to Bombay in 1668. Their influence was extended solely by peaceful means until 1746, when the war in Europe gave a pretext to the French leaders to attempt to drive the English out of India. This led to war and combinations with native princes until the battle of Wandiwash in 1759, which effectually crushed the power of the French, and gave their rivals a preponderant influence.

Clive was the real founder of our Eastern Empire : first, by the heroic defence of Arcot, which turned the tide of victory against the French, and established our reputation for courage and endurance among the natives ; and then by the battle of Plassy in 1757, when he defeated Suraja Dowla, the Subadar, or Governor of Bengal, the richest province in the Mughal empire. But though the English never faltered in battle, they shrank from boldly seizing the empire that was within their reach ; this led to much strife, and one petty revolution after another, until, in 1765, the weak emperor made over to the English Company the Dewani or civil administration of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa.

Warren Hastings was the first, and yet remains the greatest, Governor-General of India. Under him the English became rulers, and happily ceased to govern through the Emperors of Delhi or their feudatories, who had practically made themselves independent. He threw great wisdom and energy into the civil, political, and commercial affairs of the Company, and its rule was extended to Benares and to Rohilcund, whilst its preponderant influence was established throughout the Deccan.

But England did not become the paramount power without a long series of severe struggles. These comprise the four Maharatta wars from 1775 to 1819, during which the Mughal Emperor Shah Alum II. was released from Muhammadan thralldom and placed under British protec-

tion, and every single Muhammadan chief suffered overthrow and became our feudatory; the four Mysore wars, in which the short-lived but vigorous Muhammadan usurpation in Seringapatam was extinguished, and the ancient Hindu Raj restored under our auspices; the war with Nepaul; two wars with Burmah, in 1824 and 1852, which transferred its whole seaboard of 1,000 miles to our sway; the foolish and disastrous invasion of Afghanistan in 1839; the war in which the Ameers of Sind were stript of their dominions in 1843; the two Punjab wars of 1845 and 1848, in which was subjugated the land of the Five Rivers, where all other Indian conquerors commenced their conquests. Then, finally, followed the Sepoy Mutiny, a lasting memorial of our folly, our courage, and our magnanimity—when we had to subdue the army we had made far too numerous and trusted far too implicitly. Then the last of the Mughal line and the sole surviving representative of the Peshwas, and the East India Company itself, were swept away, and the empire passed under the direct supremacy of the British Crown and Parliament.

IV.—HINDUISM.

ITS SACRED WRITINGS.

These are very voluminous and varied alike in character and scope.

The Vedas stand first in age and authority. They are said to have proceeded immediately from the four mouths of Brahma, to be even a part of his essence, and so holy that none but Brahmans should read them. They are four in number: the *Rig*, *Yajur*, *Sama*, *Atharva*. The last is of inferior authority, and the second and third are largely copied from the first. All four contain compilations obviously of different dates, and are believed to have been arranged in their present form by one Byasa, who lived about 1400 B.C. Probably this is true of the *Rig Veda* only. It is exceedingly voluminous, and some of its hymns were probably used by the Aryan race prior even to their emigration into India.

Each Veda consists of two parts. First, the *Sanhita* or *Muntra*, which is a collection of hymns expressing the

religious aspirations of the Aryans ; and, secondly, the *Brahmanas*, consisting of rules for the use of the hymns with ritual directions and comments, explanatory of the sacrifices. To these have been added the *Upanishads*, a large mass of mystical and metaphysical works. These are all included in the Vedas, and are of equal authority, although undoubtedly the product of different ages, and exhibiting very different states of the Hindu mind.

To the Vedas have been added a mass of supplementary and dependent works called **Vedangas, Sutras, Durshuns**. The contents of these are very metaphysical, inconsistent, and contradictory ; yet all are indiscriminately quoted as Vedas, and popularly taken to be the foundation of the existing Hindu worship and creed. The *Bhagabat Gita* is the best known of these.

Religious Teachings of the Vedas.—There are nowhere in the Vedas indications of a prevalent belief in the unity and spirituality of one personal God. Nature and elemental worship in their simplest forms prevail. Such expressions as “ God,” “ the Creator of the Universe,” occur ; but the monotheism that gave them birth had already degenerated into a vague pantheism which had in it the seeds of a simple form of polytheism, for they are applied to different deities ; nor can it be correctly said that these different deities were but various forms of one supreme being. The greater number of the hymns are addressed to *Agni*, the god of fire ; to *Indra*, the god of the heavens ; *Dyaus*, the sky ; *Adyti*, the mother of all things ; *Surjya*, the sun ; *Varuna*, the all-pervading power ; *Vayu* the *Maruts*, the wind. It is remarkable that *Surjya* is the only Vedic divinity now worshipped.

These ancient writings are profoundly interesting for many reasons. Portions of them are amongst the most ancient documents in the world. They have exercised a more absolute authority over more minds and lives, and for a greater length of time than any writings, not even excepting the Sacred Scriptures. They are very voluminous ; the Rig Veda alone is a collection of 1,017 hymns in 10,580 verses. But chiefly they reveal to us the state of Hindu society and opinion between 2,000 and 3,000 years ago, and thus enable us to estimate the changes and corruptions which have so profusely grown up in subsequent

ages. For none of the sanguinary deities now so popular are even mentioned in the Rig Veda, nor is the degradation of women, nor perpetual widowhood, nor suttee, nor the sacredness of the cow, nor even caste in its present sense.

The Code of Menu stands next to the Vedas, and has had as much influence in regulating the state and sentiments of Hindu society as the Pentateuch among the Jews, and the writings of Confucius among the Chinese. It is as full of minute and authoritative statement as either, and treats of cosmogony, the origin and laws of caste, the duties of kings and Brahmans, of husbands and wives, the administration of law, and the practices of the religious life. It was probably never a code in the European sense, though adopted as the highest ideal for customs and usages. "It seems to be the work of a learned man designed to set forth his ideas of a perfect commonwealth under Hindu institutions." But the materials to a great extent are older than the work itself, and beyond any other authority it throws light on the state of society and opinion prior to the eighth century before Christ. It exhibits a remarkable development of Brahmanism after the Vedic age, and was probably written or condensed from various authorities with a view to secure the system of caste and the sacred privileges of the Brahmans against such popular movements as developed into Buddhism.

The two great epic poems—**Ramayana and Mahabharat**—are the Iliad and Æneid of Sanskrit literature, and have made a far more profound and permanent impression on the national mind than have the great productions of Homer and Virgil, or Dante and Milton on the mind of the West. This, however, is partly owing to the sacred and inspired character which Hindus have been in the habit of ascribing to all works of genius and influence.

The Ramayan.—Both epics are popularly ascribed to Byasa, the arranger of the Vedas, though Valmiki, an author of uncertain date, was probably the writer of the Ramayan. It extends to 100,000 verses, and is therefore several times the length of the Iliad. Versions of it exist in all the principal languages of India. Stripped of its mythological extravagance, in which the intensely religious,

imaginative Aryan mind loves to invest everything, it is based on a great expedition undertaken by Ram Chandra of Oudh, to recover his wife, Sita, who had been carried off by Ravana, king of Ceylon. On his way he had to encounter many of the savage and semi-civilized tribes which lay along the 1,000 miles and more of his march. This refers to the first great expedition of the Aryans to the south, which impressed itself indelibly on the popular mind. It occurred probably about 1000 B.C. Gradually there gathered around it a strange mass of tradition and exaggeration; but, "though full of absurdities and overlaid with Brahmanical conceits, the poem contains some of the purest and noblest thoughts to be found in profane poetry."

The *Mahabharat*, or Great War, contains no fewer than 400,000 lines, and was written probably 240 B.C. It narrates the struggle for supremacy between two kindred Khetriya families, the Pandus and the Kurus, in territory lying around Delhi, not long after the great expedition of Ram. After a bloody war the former triumphed, with the assistance of Krishna, a celebrated Indian prince and hero, and their rivals were destroyed. This has produced an even greater impression on the mind of India than the *Ramayana*. "Three-fourths of the Hindus are ignorant of all that has happened since. The rise and fall of Buddhism, even the progress of the English, by whom they are now ruled, are for them blank pages of history; but the adventures of the Pandao brothers, 2500 years ago—their misfortunes, their patience, their sufferings, their ultimate triumph, and the valour of their great ally Krishna—are present realities for them; and still, as they are yearly recited at their festivals, melt them into tears, move them into laughter, or excite them to triumph with all the intensity of personal interest." *

The *Puranas*, literally "the ancient writings," are the real scriptures of the existing forms of Hinduism, and have little connection with the Vedas or with the theology of the Code. They are eighteen in number, and are said to contain 1,600,000 lines. They date between the eighth and sixteenth centuries of our era, and the principal ones are devoted to the glorification of one or other of the two

* Robson's "Hinduism, and its Relations to Christianity."

great rival divinities of the triad, Vishnu and Siva. Their contents are very varied, consisting of treatises on cosmogony, geography, astronomy, history, morals, metaphysics; but yet more of legends relating to the history, achievements, and claims of certain of the gods, and instruction relating to the forms and ceremonies of their worship. There is no coherence of plan, no harmony of design, between these books. Some are excessively laudatory of one divinity over another. They partake of a distinctly sectarian character. The rival meritoriousness of worship, pilgrimage, torture, and asceticism are maintained; certain courses of conduct which some of them pronounce to be good are by others declared to be evil; and the means indicated here and there to attain merit and to get quit of sin are elsewhere asserted to be of no efficacy whatever. Ethical teaching is not absent, but it is overlaid with triviality, exaggeration, ceremonialism, and indecency. Next to the difficulty of reading through the Koran, the most irksome toil of the writer's life was to wade through the Vishnu Purana.

Two other classes of writings have a widely distinct and powerful influence.

1. **The Theologico-Metaphysical Treatises**, on which one or other of the six great systems of philosophy are based.

The Brahmans have always pondered deeply on the mysteries of life and of nature. Hence, gradually from the Vedic age they elaborated *The Dursuns*, literally, "mirrors of knowledge"—schools in which the great mysteries of thought and being, of mind and matter, and of soul as apart from both; of the origin of evil, of the *summum bonum* of life, of necessity and free-will, and of the relations of the Creator to the creature, are endlessly discussed. "*The Sankhya*, founded by the sage Kapila, explains the visible world by assuming the existence of a primordial matter from all eternity, out of which the universe has by successive stages evolved itself. *The Yoga* school of Patanjali assumes the existence of a primordial soul anterior to the primeval matter, and holds that from the union of the two the spirit of life (*Mahāuatma*) arose. *The two Vedānta* schools ascribe the visible world to a divine act of creation, and assume an omnipotent God as the cause of the existence, the continuance, and the dissolution

of the universe. *The Nyāya*, or logical school of Gautama, enunciates the method of arriving at truth, and lays special stress on the sensations. It is usually classed together with the sixth school, the *Vaisesika*, founded by the sage Kanada, which teaches the existence of a transient world composed of eternal atoms. All the six schools had the same starting-point—*ex nihilo nihil fit*; and their sages, as a rule, struggled towards the same end—the liberation of the human soul from the necessity of existence, and from the chain of future births, by its absorption into the Supreme Soul, or the primordial essence of the universe.”*

2. **The Tantras** are very numerous, and some are of considerable size; but they are not included in any of the ordinary catalogues of Hindu literature. There are reasons for this. They are but little known by European scholars, and are kept beyond their reach, but sufficient has been ascertained to warrant the assertion that they are the authorities for all that is abominable and revolting in the present state of Hinduism. The root principle of the Sakta sectaries is the adoration given to female divinities, and especially to Parvoti, the wife of Siva, and from this have come the bloody sacrifices offered to Kali, with the brutalities associated with her worship, and the barbarities, indecencies, and wild license of Durga's great festival; but darker practices are associated with it which do not meet the public eye, or can be named by Christian tongue or pen, and which are the more revolting because done in the sacred name of religion.

THE DIVINITIES.

Hinduism popularly regarded is a stupendous, incongruous, and most demoralizing polytheism, based on a very gross form of pantheism. This chiefly demands our attention. But it has its esoteric as well as exoteric, its philosophical as well as popular, its monotheistic as well as polytheistic side.

There have ever been in India an unusually large class of devout, speculative thinkers who, not satisfied with the polytheism which variously modified has always prevailed,

* Hunter's "Indian Empire," p. 109.

have striven to get behind it for the purpose of understanding the origin and nature of all life—mundane, divine, and human, with the qualities and essences which govern their origin, forms, and destiny. Allusion must be made to these speculations when we come to treat of Hindu opinion and the singular construction of society it has produced, for these have their origin and form from the former. But the popular aspects of the religion as presented in the Puranas and common life of the people chiefly claim our notice. It should be distinctly borne in mind that certain gods are much more worshipped by some of the nationalities than by others; that some are hardly worshipped at all; that some districts have new divinities neither read of in the Shastras or honoured in an adjoining province, and that even the great festivals have a provincial rather than an imperial celebration.

Brumho.—The acknowledgment of one god is very general—"Ek Brumho dityo nasti," "One Brumho without a second," is a saying frequent in the Shastras and often on the lips of disputants. But their conception of a Supreme Being differs entirely from ours. Brumho is normally in a state of absolute repose or inaction without attribute or sensation. At certain revolutions of time he awakes to consciousness and unites himself to *Maya*, a mysterious being or *energy*, significant of matter, which is believed to be eternal. When thus joined to his energy, Brumho creates the universe, and becomes active in all animated beings. Thus for a time he is insulated in organized portions of matter, which in time he quits to join himself to new ones. It follows that all forms of life are but emanations or portions of the divine life. Thus the generally received conception of God resolves itself into Pantheism.

Creation.—There are no less than eighteen distinct theories on this subject, all based on the Shastras, some of which are extremely vague, others extraordinarily minute.

The theory now popularly accepted is that Brumho, having united himself with his energy, produced, or rather himself became, a triad of gods, called *Brumha the Creator*, *Vishnu the Preserver*, and *Siva the Destroyer*. His energy also became multiplied in three distinct female forms—

Shoroshoti, who became the consort of Brumha, *Luksmi* of Vishnu, and *Bhogoboti* or *Parvoti* of Siva.

Brumha, thus created to be the creator, or re-former, then brought into existence the three worlds as they are called—the heavens, the earth, and “patal,” or the lower regions. The first became peopled with gods, demi-gods, and genii; the last with giants, hydras, dragons, and serpents.

The existence of the visible universe is co-extensive with the life of Brumha. Time was when he did not exist, the time is coming when even he will cease to be; and the days and years of his life regulate the successive ages and fix the limits of the existence of all material things. The number of years during which he will exist is one hundred; but, according to Brahminical reckoning, a day of Brumha extends to the stupendous length of two billions one hundred and sixty millions of our years; consequently as we are said to be now living in the fifty-first year of Brumha's existence, the reader will find it difficult to frame in words any conception of the time that has passed since the Creation, or of the duration of our years ere it will lapse into chaos. The life of the universe, which thus is equivalent to the life of Brumha, is divided into various periods, called *Mahajugs* and *Kalpas*. The latter is equivalent to a day of Brumha. Every Maha-jug (or “great age”) is subdivided into four lesser periods, called the Sattya, Trita, Dwapur, and Kali jugs; somewhat corresponding to the golden, silver, brazen, and iron ages of Grecian and Roman mythology.

The Shastras say that the Sattya-jug extended to 1,728,000 of our years. Then men were all holy and good, they lived 100,000 years, and were thirty-one feet in stature. The Trita-jug lasted 1,296,000 years; men were then twenty-one feet in height, lived 10,000 years, and were but three-fourths as virtuous as those of the previous age. The Dwapur-jug lasted 866,000 years; men were then eleven feet high, lived 1,000 years, and retained but one-half their original goodness. We live in the Kali-jug, which will extend over 432,000 years. About 6,000 of these have passed, goodness has yet further declined, and, as the deterioration is progressing, the race will ultimately become so corrupt that Vishnu will become incarnate that he may destroy all by fire.

At the end of every Kalpa, or 1,000 Maha-jugs, there comes a night of Brumha, when his energy ceases, and he lapses into quietude. Then all things return to chaos. All forms of organized life are consumed by fire. The fire is extinguished by mighty rains. The earth becomes a shoreless ocean. Only the gods, sages, and elements survive, and when Brumha wakes and finds what mischief his quietude has generated, he again becomes wedded to his energy, and out of the eternal elements ready to his hand evolves a new earth. This form of "secondary creation," as it is called, is repeated during the 100 years of Brumha's existence.

At the end of this stupendous period Brumha himself will die, with even the gods and holy sages; all forms of organized and individual life will retrograde into their constituent elements, until all things merge into the single rudiment of being—the sole—existent, incomprehensible Brumho!

After a considerable interval, similar causes produce similar effects. Brumho again awakes from his repose, the creation is renewed; and thus the universe eternally fluctuates between existence and non-existence, without motive and without end.

It need not be pointed out how essentially this conception of a Supreme Being differs from the Christian one. His name is pronounced by all, but he is nothing more than the basis of a theory. He is not even the creator, still less is he the ruler, guardian, judge. To pray to or praise him, to love or serve him, by acts of holy obedience and the cultivation of the moral and spiritual faculties, would to most seem unreasonable, and certainly does not form any part of an orthodox Hindu's experience. The only act he is supposed to accomplish in the economy of the universe is neither spontaneous nor moral. Pundits usually describe him as without parts or qualities. He is a cypher in the existence of the universe, a name only in Hinduism. India is a land of gods, temples, worshippers, as probably no land has ever been; but no temple is known to have been erected to Brumho, nor are prayers or praises offered to him, for he is supposed neither to see or know or care.

The gods alone are seen, worshipped, feared, in the pre-

valent forms of superstition. Some Hindu and European apologists have assumed that the gods are intercessors with the Supreme; others that they are personifications of one or other of His attributes; others that they are designed to assist us toward true conceptions of Him. All this is but theory, and undoubtedly Hindu speculatists have woven out of it and kindred theories the most diverse forms of atheism, pantheism, and monotheistic spiritualism. But such speculations are necessarily confined to the few.

It is not only with these, but with the extraordinary Mythology which has become the superstition of the great mass of the people, that the Christian and the Missionary have to deal; and emphasis should be laid on the fact that Puranic Hinduism, which is now its popular form, is intensely material and immoral, incapable of reform, and too irrational and gross to admit of any spiritual interpretation.

The 33 gods of the Vedas have become the 330 million gods of the Puranas. Literally, however, the popular divinities do not exceed 60, and only some of these need be described.

Brumha, Vishnu, and Siva constitute the triad at the head of the pantheon.

Brumha is represented with four faces, dressed in white and riding on a goose. As the Creator he was probably in remote times much worshipped, though now he has no temples, nor is he adopted as the favourite divinity of any. Sectarian rivalry has probably led to this, for the Shastras speak of him disparagingly as addicted to intemperance, as the patron of abandoned characters, and as having attempted to seduce his own daughter. He is supposed to have had five faces, but boasting that he was greater than Siva, that god in vindication of his power tore off one!

Vishnu is said to have a thousand names. The best known of these are *Hari*, *Naryan*, *Krishna*, *Ram*, *Perumal*, and *Patmanabhan*; the latter being his name in the province of Travancore, of which he is the patron divinity. Through his incarnations he fills a large space in Hindu mythology. He is represented as black or blue, having four arms, and riding on a creature half man and half bird.

In the idea that has been formed of the government of the world, Vishnu's interposition as Preserver has been repeatedly required, and nine of his incarnations are the great themes of legend and song.

1. His first avatar (or incarnation), as a *fish*, was to bring the Sacred Vedas from the depths of the ocean, where they had been lost after one of the periodical cataclysms which occur in the life of Brumha.

2. The next avatar was as a *tortoise*, that he might support on his back an immense mountain called Monda, with which the gods and demi-gods used to churn the sea when seeking to obtain the elixir of immortality.

3. The earth was in danger of being submerged after one of the kalpas which measure the life of Brumha, when Vishnu became a *boar*, and drew it from the abyss by suspending it on his tusks.

4. Hycanokyo Kasipo, a giant and impious king, denied the presence and defied the power of Vishnu, on which he became *Narshingha*, a being *half lion and half man*, and tore his reviler to pieces.

5. In the form of a *Brahman dwarf*, by deceit and treachery, he deprived a powerful king named Bali of all his dominions.

6. He became *Purushram*, a great *hero*, for the purpose of waging war on the Khetriyas, who had made themselves specially obnoxious to the Brahmans.

7. As *Ram* he was the hero of the great epic which bears his name.

8. As *Krishna* he destroyed the giant king Kungsho.

9. He appeared as a *sage* and ascetic under the name of *Buddha*, for the purpose of obtaining for Siva the sovereignty of Benares. This he did by specious teaching which led to scepticism and even atheism, and by treachery to the hereditary king, who was one of his most devoted disciples.

A tenth avatar will occur at the end of the Kali-jug, when he will destroy the world.

Siva, the Destroyer, is represented in various ways. He is called "the furious," "the lord of devils." He is said to delight in revelry, the smoking of intoxicating drugs, slaughter, and practices generally degrading and demoralizing. Nevertheless, he fills a larger place in the mind

and worship of the people than any other single divinity. The *linga*, a cut and polished stone, the symbol under which worship is paid to Siva, is perhaps more frequently met with throughout India than the figure or symbol of any god; and yet its associations are too bad to be described.

Krishna, though but a form of Vishnu, and not supposed to possess great or enduring power, is one of the most popular divinities throughout Northern India. Hymns to his praise and narratives of his tricks and exploits everywhere kindle the enthusiasm of the people, especially of women. Here are specimens of their subject matter.—His nurse, one day looking into his mouth, saw the three worlds, with Brumha, Vishnu, and Siva sitting on their thrones.—When eight years of age, he took up a mountain in his arms and held it as an umbrella over the heads of the villagers and their cattle, to protect them from a dreadful storm.—When a child his frequent and cunning thefts of butter and curds were incessant.—He created a great number of cattle, and boys and girls to replace those which Brumha had stolen. The grossest licentiousness is the chief feature of the Krishna legends, and this is beyond description, popular though it is.

Durga's festival is the most popular throughout Bengal. "She is Parvoti or Bhogoboti, the wife of Siva, and took the former name from a giant she vanquished. By religious austerities he conquered the three worlds, dethroned all the secondary divinities who had to take refuge in forests, obliged the wives even of the great sages to sing his praise, the Brahmans to submit to his pleasure, and nature to reverse her laws. When the gods sought the pity of Siva, he desired his wife to go and destroy the giant; and their conflicts are the theme of songs, which to Europeans are offensive and ridiculous by their gross exaggeration, but which to the lower classes of India afford the highest delight. Giants of frightful size, with 1,000 arms, 100,000,000 chariots, 120,000,000,000 elephants (one of them as large as a mountain), 10,000,000 horses, innumerable soldiers—9,000,000 of whom issued from the body of Parvoti—figure in these sacred annals.

Kali is a goddess similar in character and achievements to Durga.

Gunnesh, or **Ganpati**, in the form of a fat short man, with an elephant's head, four hands, and sitting on a rat, is one of the popular divinities of South India. He is a glutton and a debauchee, but the patron of literature. At the commencement of some great festivals, when a journey or a letter, or a business is commenced, or a boy sent to school, his favour is sought. His strange head was obtained through the following incident. When it was known that Parvoti had a son, Suni and the rest of the gods were invited to see the child. Suni went, but conscious that his gaze was so intense that if he looked at the child's face it would be burnt to ashes, refused to look. This irritated Parvoti, who regarded it as an insult. For a time he did not regard her reproofs, but at length lifted up his eyes when, instantly, his glance consumed the head of Gunnesh. The grief of the mother would have led her to destroy Suni had not Brumha interposed, who told him to bring the head of the first animal he should meet. This happened to be an elephant, so its head was transferred to the shoulders of Gunnesh. His mother was but little satisfied with this arrangement, until Brumha promised that in the worship of the other gods that of her son should ever have the precedence.

Other divinities need not be described. Of these, **Juggernaut**, "the lord of the world," to whose shrine, in Orissa, pilgrimages from immense distances are made; **Kartick**, the gay god of war, always represented riding on a peacock; and **Honuman**, the friend and helper of Ram, are amongst the most popular.

The foregoing sketch will convey a fair idea of the Hindu divinities and the legends relating to them, if it be borne in mind that an amount of grossness and impurity attaches to their characters and deeds which can only be hinted at.

THE POPULAR WORSHIP.

In no other country are there so many temples, shrines, and symbols of worship as in India. Those consecrated to Siva, Vishnu, Krishna, and their wives, under different forms and names, are most numerous. Then follow those of Gunnesh, Juggernaut, the monkey god Honuman, and a host of inferior divinities. Images and symbols, too, in

yet greater abundance, are seen where there are no temples. In every village, however small or poor, and in every noticeable place, like the summit of a hill or the base of a stately tree, an uncouth idol of wood or stone bears witness to the deep religious feelings of the people.

Its Pantheistic Character.—"There is a strange mixture of aboriginal fetishism with Brahmanical pantheism in the popular religion of the mass of the people. Everything great and useful—everything strange, monstrous, and unusual, whether good or evil, is held to be permeated by the presence of divinity. It is not merely all the mighty phenomena and forces of the universe—all the most striking manifestations of Almighty energy—that excite the awe and attract the reverence of the ordinary Hindu. There is not an object in earth or heaven which he is not prepared to worship—rocks, stocks and stones, trees, pools and rivers, his own implements of trade, the animals he finds most useful, the noxious reptiles he fears, men remarkable for any extraordinary qualities—for great valour, sanctity, virtue, or even vice; good and evil demons, ghosts and goblins, the spirits of departed ancestors, an infinite number of semi-human, semi-divine existences—inhabitants of the seven upper and the seven lower worlds—each and all of these come in for a share of divine honour or a tribute of more or less adoration. Verily, the Hindu Pantheon has a place for every body and every thing. The principal deities are merely the occupants of its most conspicuous niches. To attempt an exhaustive enumeration of its minor gods and goddesses would be a hopeless task, and to count the ever multiplying army of its martyrs, saints, and sages, would be a simple impossibility. New shrines are continually springing up to receive the remains of holy men or ascetics—examples of extraordinary sanctity, or of some peculiar manifestation of the divine energy, who, after death, are canonized and deified." *

Among the animals worshipped the cow is especially sacred. Being the most useful of animals, it typifies the beneficent earth. To kill one, or even eat its flesh, are enormous sins, and the former used to be punished with death. Serpents and monkeys are very sacred, and the latter are never killed.

* "Hinduism," by Professor Monier Williams.

Among plants the most revered is the Tulsi, or holy Basil, which is sacred to Vishnu. So also the Bel tree with its triple leaf is sacred to Siva, and the Pipal tree to Brahma. No Hindu will voluntarily cut down any of these. The Banyan is less, but Kusa grass most sacred.

Among the stones worshipped are especially the Salgram as representing Vishnu, and the Lingam as Siva.

Holy Places abound, from the very soil of which are supposed to exhale sanctity, salvation, and beatitude, for the benefit of thousands who annually visit them. But the motives for pilgrimage are varied; such as to atone for sin, to accumulate religious merit, to obtain some coveted blessing, or to convey the ashes of a departed relative to a famed shrine.

Several of the rivers are revered. The Ganges, as being the most majestic and beneficent, has become the most sacred and revered. It can remove the greatest sins; the worst characters are benefited by ablution in its waters; and to die on its banks is a sure passport to future beatitude. One of the most beautiful and least offensive legends of Hinduism, though by no means exempt from gross exaggeration, is the Puranic narrative of the cause why the goddess Gunga assumed the river form.

The Ganges is sacred through its entire length; but at three points it is especially so. At Hurdwar, where it leaves the Himalayas and begins its beneficent course through the vast Gangetic plain; at Allahabad, where it receives the waters of the great river Jumna; and at Saugor island, 120 miles south of Calcutta, where its extreme western branch enters the sea. One of the most impressive religious sights anywhere to be witnessed is to see the myriads who from vast distances assemble at those places, on special occasions, to bathe and pray. But every morning numbers of men and women from the towns and villages on its densely populated banks assemble to pay their devotions whilst standing in the divine, all-beneficent stream. Strange, touching incidents meet the gaze daily along the river side, wherever the population is considerable. Here lies a dying man, close to the stream, attended by his relatives and a priest, who have brought him, it may be, many miles through the blazing

sunbeams or flooding rains, to die thus safely. There another party tend the burning pyre on which their dead relative is being consumed ere his remains are consigned to the all-purifying stream. There too may be seen coolies carefully filling their jars to be carried on foot, perhaps hundreds of miles, to some well-endowed temple, or to add a like glory and efficacy to the family devotions of some rich man. There is a devotee, who day by day for long hours through tedious ritual and endless repetition fulfils his vows; another is passing slowly yet intently along the river's bank. He is a pilgrim who has vowed to walk all the immense distance from the river's source, far away in the Himalayas at Gangoutri, to the sea, on one side the river, and then to retrace his steps on the opposite bank; a distance of more than 1,600 miles each way, and a task it will take him six years to accomplish!

Benares, and the country within a radius of ten miles, is regarded as a portion of heaven let down on earth. It has been respected from time immemorial as the most sacred spot in India. All devout Hindus desire to visit it at least once, and multitudes of the heart-sick and weary go to die in a place whence even unclean Europeans, however defiled by guilt, pass to some heaven of the gods. Its temples number 2,000; its shrines and idols amount to hundreds of thousands, and its Brahman residents to at least 25,000.

It would not be possible to name even a tithe of the sacred places. Gya and Muttra are famed among cities; Juggernath, Pandharpur in the Deccan, with Rameswaram and Chilumbrum farther south, and Trevandrum and Suchindram, in Travancore, are celebrated as temples; but confluences of rivers, tanks, monasteries, and spots innumerable, are supposed to be consecrated by the presence or deeds of the principal male and female divinities.

Holy Seasons are very numerous. No people so "observe days and months and times and years." The effect of this on the daily life of the people is great, and is alluded to elsewhere. Great lunar and solar changes are marked by religious observances, and it is according to these that the chief festivals are fixed; the latter are numerous, and sometimes as with the *Holi* and *Durga Puja* extend over several days.

Hindu is distinguished from Christian worship: (1) By its irregularity. It has no periodical day of rest as have Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. (2) It is associated with no times of moral and religious instruction. *Gurus* are supposed to give such in the families engaging their services; and here and there, with singular effect, recitations from the great dramas and epics are given. But no heathen people have ever had anything analogous to Christian preaching, the most efficacious and powerful method of popular instruction the world has ever seen. (3) Worship forms but a small part of each festival. Its degeneracy from any true ideal of adoration, prayer, and desire after holy and spiritual good is first seen in the sacrifices offered, the gifts presented, with the accompaniments of music, garlands, gestures, often wild or obscene; and then in the pleasure-seeking excitement and traffic which make the thoughtful observer hesitate whether to call what he witnesses a feast, a festival, or a fair.

Private devotion is by no means wanting. With the ignorant but devout; it consists mainly in the repetition of formulas supposed to be endowed with the force of a charm; with the intellectual, in quietude and contemplation. But misdirected though it be, the existence of a devout disposition is largely characteristic of the people; no race worships more generally; and in this is seen a feature full of promise and worthy of the utmost respect.

V. MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

A people very thoughtful, observant, punctilious, courteous, and devout; who, left to themselves, face to face with Nature in her most magnificent and terrible aspects, evoke great beliefs and imaginings respecting transcendental monotheism, pantheism, polytheism, and metempsychosis, could hardly fail to develop a most unique state of society, characterized by very singular features. The results as seen in Hindu philosophy, literature, and mythology, have already been briefly described. The effect on social and domestic life is deep and all-pervading. To trace this throughout is not within the scope of our design. But some ideas, crystallized more or less into customs, have so powerfully affected the form and well-

being of society, and so strongly oppose the advance of Christianity, that they demand our attention; the most important of these are *caste*, *transmigration*, and *the state of women*.

Caste is far more than a social, political, or even religious distinction. According to general belief, Brumha created distinct kinds of men, as he created various kinds of animals. Brahmans, Khetriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras, were made distinct from each other, were destined to be distinct though mutually dependent; and to violate the distinction is held to be unnatural, impious, and criminal. In the course of time the second and third of these great divisions have almost disappeared; but from a variety of causes the first and last have become so subdivided that Mr. Sherring, in his "Hindu Tribes and Castes," enumerates 1,886 separate Brahmanical tribes, and Dr. Wilson, of Bombay, a yet greater number. Sudra castes are yet more numerous. The rules affecting their relations to one another are multitudinous and exacting, and relate especially to marriage, food, and occupation. Not only is marriage between any of the four great divisions forbidden, but between most of the subdivisions. "For example, there are, it is said, eighty-four sub-castes of Brahmans in Gujerat who are not allowed to intermarry."*

The usages relating to food, and those with whom it may be eaten, are exceedingly strict. Certain things, especially beef, are rigidly forbidden. So, for one of high caste to eat food prepared by one of inferior caste, or along with him, or for one man of the lowest caste, however poor, to take food with a casteless man, however rich, is defiling. There are millions, even of Sudras, who, in addition to a caste rank which subjects them to the abhorrence and contempt of Brahmans, are exceedingly poor, yet whom no wealth and no suffering would tempt to break their caste. "I saw," says Dr. Hunter, "a Brahman felon try to starve himself to death and submit to a flogging rather than eat his food, on account of scruples as to whether the birthplace of the north-western Brahman, who had cooked it, was equal in sanctity to his own native district."

Through all changes of society the Brahmans have

* "Hinduism," by Professor Monier Williams, p. 155.

managed, with wonderful tenacity, to retain their sacerdotal and literary pre-eminence, with liberty to engage in many secular employments which do not involve contamination and degradation. But the other castes not only cannot rise, they are restricted in their occupations, "for each caste is to some extent a trade-guild, a mutual assurance society, and a religious sect." This is so even with the subdivisions of caste. The Sudras, for instance, who now form the great bulk of the Hindu commonwealth, are divided and subdivided into numerous castes, each of which rigidly prohibits its members from eating with many other Sudra castes, inter-marrying with them, or adopting their trades. But this exclusiveness is carried farther in some provinces than in others, and is most rigid in the south. In Travancore, for instance, "a respectable Sudra may approach, but not touch a Brahman. A Shanar must not approach within thirty-six paces, nor a Pulayar slave within ninety-six paces; whilst again, a Shanar must remain twelve steps away from a Nair, though the latter is only a Sudra; a Pulayar thirty-six steps, and so on through a graduated scale." *

Though caste has its extraordinarily rigid aspects, it is nevertheless full of anomalies. Thus, though no Sudra, however rich, or wise, or religious, can rise into the caste above him, there may be a relative elevation. In the north, for example, the Sudra is at the base of society, many of their castes embracing the lowest of the people, who yet from the inveteracy of the caste sentiment cling to the system though they obtain but a most contemptuous recognition; whilst in the south, especially in Tinnevely and Travancore, Sudras rank high in the social and religious scale, since large communities like the Ilavars and Shanars have inferior rank, and others, as Pariahs and Pulayars, a lower rank still, if they are not regarded as outcastes.

The pride, servility, heartlessness, and punctiliousness engendered by this extraordinary idea it would be difficult to describe. Its inveteracy is one of its most singular features, considering that it subjects the great mass of the people to abject and hopeless subjection to a small

* "Travancore and its People," by Rev. S. Mateer, p. 32.

minority. The result is a state of servility such as the world has nowhere else developed.

Transmigration is closely connected with caste. The original idea held in the ages preceding Menu, that the soul, as the result of a good or bad life, passed at death into some other human, or animal, or even vegetable form of existence, has developed in two directions. What we now are, is assumed to be the consequence of what the soul did in some previous form of existence, it may be ten thousand years ago; and it may have to pass through myriads of lives, in reptile, brute, or human forms, ere its contamination is purged away. Then, too, in modern belief, far more emphasis is laid on ceremonial than on moral defilement. Fraud, falsehood, immorality, do not necessarily involve degradation in a future life, but a violation of caste principles and usages does. In certain cases the lost purity may be restored, but he who insults a Brahman, or eats with an outcaste, or partakes of cows' flesh, or becomes a Christian, is doomed to degradation through many myriad forms of repulsive life.

The marked effect of this strange, weird belief is powerfully to dominate over the imagination, and to cause it to be the one great care of a Hindu to keep his caste undefiled. Thus does he become a timid frightened slave.

The Position of Women can only here be slightly sketched. It is my design to treat it with greater amplitude in a separate volume. The subject is alike vast, painful, intricate, and important.

Vast, since it relates to the social, intellectual, and moral condition of at least *ninety millions* of the female sex all through life, from birth to death. And to these must be added the *twenty-one millions* of Muhammadan women, whose condition is only slightly better. Painful, since it is quite capable of proof that in no country in the world, nor indeed in any age, have an equal number of human beings been more helpless, more ignominiously treated, or liable to equal suffering. Intricate, since Englishmen in India are ignorant of the thoughts and feelings of millions of women near whom they live, and have no means of knowing them but at second hand; for very few Europeans, though residents in India for many years, have ever looked on the face of a "purdah lady."

Intricate also, since it is difficult to understand how a race so gentle, courteous, intelligent, and observant of character, have come to adopt customs relative to women which powerfully and most unjustly affect their position in every possible phase of life. And important, not only as productive of misery and degradation to them, but of immense loss and demoralization to the sex which so wrongs them, and in relation to Christian effort; for the usages of society hitherto have restricted our access to but half, and that the least devout and impressionable half of the community.

The usages which bring so much degradation and unhappiness to one sex, and corresponding evils to the other, have their origin in the almost universal sentiment, that women are intellectually and morally inferior to men. The stern, cruel words of the great Hindu codifier have been adopted and acted on with singular uniformity; and hence have sprung disappointment at the birth of a girl, female infanticide, child marriage, systematic abstinence from education, feminine seclusion from public life and masculine society even in social life, suttee, perpetual widowhood; with all the wrongs and sorrows connected with these, which are unutterably great and sad.

It is far beyond our limits even to refer to the numberless trivial and punctilious usages which vex and fetter the people all through life. The customs associated with birth, marriage, and death are each very elaborate, and if described would fill many pages. But even these usages, deep-rooted though they be, are beginning slowly to yield before the beneficent influences of Christianity. Ward, in his "*Manners and Customs of the Hindus*," illustrates fully, not only the habits of the people, but reveals also the absorbing and penetrative power of the Brahminical priesthood. His book was written at the beginning of the century, and is thus indicative of the state of society before missionary effort had begun to tell. But a Hindu of the present day would declare that it was no longer an accurate description of myriads of Hindu families, and thus tacitly would admit the great influence of Christianity, and the silent but mighty revolution which is being wrought in the thoughts and habits of the people.

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